



Every Life is a Masterpiece

By Fran Goldenberg

"Begin it now" was the message Entwistle heard while listening to a Barbara Streisand interview on television; Streisand had paraphrased the philosopher, Goethe. "Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back. At the moment of commitment the universe conspires to assist you." Inspired by that thought, Entwistle boldly embarked on her vision of Living Celebrations. She saw the need for a change of direction in her life. It was time to move past the analytical, logical, left-brain thinking that had worked so well for her in the business world and get in touch with her creative, free spirited, emotional right-brain.

"Approaching my fiftieth birthday, I found that a handwritten message from the heart on a Hallmark card made a better gift than another sweater or a potted plant," explains Entwistle. Listening to a memorial service further inspired her. "Capturing people's memories, their life stories, while they are alive makes more sense than eulogizing them."

Living Celebrations uniquely offers the opportunity to be immortalized by visually capturing the essence of one's life experiences from the living. Living Celebrations creates a customized work of art, a biographical Masterpiece, that captures the life of the celebrant for generations to come. This museum-quality artwork is the perfect way to mark a milestone event, such as a significant birthday, retirement or anniversary, in a most personal and distinctive way.

The Living Celebrations process is a rich and unforgettable experience in itself for the individual receiving the gift, the celebrant, as well as the person commissioning the project, the patron. It begins with interviews with the celebrant, their significant friends, and family members. Entwistle travels throughout the country to do these interviews in person, learning as much as possible about the person – their attributes, visions, strengths, and weaknesses. Taking this information back to her design team, they can prepare two possible concepts for presentation to the patron.

The process takes six to nine months from start to finish and can be an emotional one for Entwistle. "During the interview to commemorate a dedicated wife and mother who loved to collect Christmas ornaments, the woman described her best Christmas ever when she was 9 years old. She tearfully reminisced about a repainted bicycle, almost becoming that 9-year old again during the interview," says Entwistle. Living Celebrations created a collection of twenty-eight unique ornaments that capture the highlights of her life.

Entwistle and her team reflected the "mover-and-shaker" spirit of one of their corporate celebrants, by developing a collection of custom-designed flags bound in an accordion-style book. Each flag bears a hand-colored icon that represents a key moment in the celebrant's life. Only one edge of each flag is bound to the page, so as the reader stretches the book to its full extension, the flags ripple in unison - a kinetic representation of the person's active life. Although he was initially skeptical, not in favor of looking back, when presented with the completed Masterpiece he realized the control he had on his own legacy. That was a gift.

A Masterpiece is not a catalog item engraved with initials or a scrapbook collection of a person's life. Although each Masterpiece generally includes a biographical book, there are three-dimensional elements to the celebrant's story. "Women over 40 really get it," says Entwistle. "They are more sentimental, they may have experienced some loss, and they realize that a hundred years from now this will be important."

It is a one-of-a-kind gift that perpetuates into the future. There is extra space for more great events as celebrants continue to make their marks on life. "Less than 40% of adults can name their great-grandparents," says Entwistle. "Of those that can, do they know if they had a sense of humor or a favorite craft?" The sheer magnitude of a gift from Living Celebrations is a treasure for generations.